

retreat. This was safely accomplished on the night of the 1st of December, and on the following day the Federal army regained its quarters at Culpeper Court-house. Lee was more surprised at the retreat of Meade than he was by his advance, and his men, who had been in high spirits at the prospect of obliterating the memory of Gettysburg, were sadly disappointed at the loss of the opportunity.

During these operations occurred an incident which has often been told of General Lee. On Sunday, the 28th, while waiting for the expected Federal attack, the general was riding down the lines, attended by General Hill with his staff, when he came upon a group of his men who were holding a prayer-meeting. They were riding briskly, but the general at once halted and listened reverently to the singing of the men. He remained in that attitude until the benediction was pronounced, when he raised his hat, received the blessing, and then continued his ride. It was an impressive scene, and disposed to solemn feelings all who were present.

Finding that the enemy was not inclined to attack, Lee decided to give them a surprise, and to assail their lines on the morning of December 2d. Preparations were made during the night, two divisions being concentrated on the right in readiness to fall on the enemy's left flank, while all other arrangements for a battle were completed. But with the dawning of the next day it was discovered that the camp in front, which the day before had been full of busy life, was silent and empty. Meade's army was in full retreat toward the Rapidan. Pursuit was immediately made. But it was in vain. The light marching equipment of General Meade enabled him to far outstrip his pursuers. So suddenly had he disappeared that the army was astounded. This fact is illustrated in a story told by a staff officer who had been sent with an order to General Hampton.

"In looking for him," he says, "I got far to our right, and in a hollow of the woods found a grand guard of the Eleventh cavalry, with pickets and videttes out, gravely sitting their horses and watching the wood-roads for the advance of an enemy who was then retreating across Ely's Ford."

The pursuit was quickly abandoned as useless, and the army was marched back over a road which was bordered by burning woods, which had been set on fire by the Federal camp-fires. It was an imposing spectacle as the gleaming flames lit up the pathway of the army which was marching between them toward the impregnable post in which it had so recently defied a still more threatening foe.

Thus ended the campaigning of the year 1863, the most eventful year of the war, and one in which, while the army led by General Lee had experienced a variety of fortunes, it had won for itself imperishable fame, and done much to establish for its leader his well-deserved title of "one of the great captains of the world." The year had not closed as propitiously for the Confederate cause as the previous year, and the brilliant success of the army in the spring had been marred by its unsuccessful campaign in Pennsylvania. Although it had not felt itself beaten and its spirit was still unshaken, yet its failure to accomplish what had been expected, together with the fall of Vicksburg and the want of success in the South and West, had a depressing effect. Yet, despite these reverses, the Army of Northern Virginia at all times presented a bold and defiant front, and was ever ready to meet the enemy in battle, with thorough confidence in the ability of its leader and in its own steady valor.

The season was now so far advanced that neither general contemplated the prosecution of further operations during the winter; therefore preparations were commenced for going into winter quarters. While the main body of the Confederate army remained on the Rapidan, the artillery, with the exception of two or three battalions, was sent to the line of the Virginia Central Railroad, for the greater convenience of foraging the horses. The artillery of the Second corps was located at Frederick's Hall, while that of the Third occupied the neighborhood of Cobham Station, a few miles west of Gordonsville.

The prayer-meeting scene which we have described was significant of an unusual phase of army life of which something further may be said. A revival of religion had taken place in the army, and religious gatherings in the woods and in the

camp, in which bronzed and war-worn veterans listened devoutly to the exhortations of their pastors and prayed fervently to the God of battles for aid to their country and themselves, became of common occurrence. General Lee took great pleasure in this display of religious emotion. He gave it every encouragement, conversed with the chaplains, and assisted them in their labors to the utmost of his power. He requested their prayers for himself, and exhibited that sincere religious faith which was ever a strong element in his character.

An interval of favorable weather in February caused the Army of the Potomac to exhibit signs of renewed activity; but the prompt appearance of General Lee induced General Meade to return to his winter quarters. The inactivity of winter was not again disturbed until March, when the Federals projected a cavalry expedition for the capture of Richmond by a secret and rapid movement. This expedition was composed of two columns, one of which advanced toward Richmond under Kilpatrick, while the other, commanded by Colonel Dahlgren, proceeded from the neighborhood of Culpeper Court-house, with instructions to destroy the artillery at Frederick's Hall, form a junction with Kilpatrick, capture Richmond by a *coup de main*, destroy the city, and liberate the prisoners on Belle Isle. Being apprehensive that a cavalry dash might be made on the artillery cantoned about Frederick's Hall, General Long applied for two regiments of infantry in order to secure him against such an attempt. This small force was declined, on the ground that the army was so much depleted that it could with difficulty protect the line of the Rapidan.

General Long, however, obtained a hundred and twenty-five muskets and accoutrements, which he distributed among four battalions of artillery, and organized in each a small company of sharpshooters. To this precaution may be attributed the safety of the artillery at Frederick's Hall. Dahlgren captured the Confederate pickets at Germanna Ford, crossed the Rapidan, and advanced within a few miles of the artillery cantonment before his approach had been discovered. Long had barely time to make the following disposition: Colonel Braxton was ordered to place one battery in position to command

the road on which Dahlgren was advancing, to deploy his sharpshooters as skirmishers, and to withdraw his other batteries to a position near the station; at the same time he directed Brown's battalion to be placed in position to command the approaches below the station. Cutshaw's and Carter's battalions were ordered to a position a little in the rear of Braxton's and Brown's, in order to support them, and sharpshooters were sent to reinforce Brown's battalion.

These dispositions were barely completed before the head of Dahlgren's column came in view of Braxton's battery on the road. Seeing the battle-flag flying above the battery, and catching a glimpse of the bayonets of the sharpshooters, he halted in some surprise, having been led to suppose that the artillery at Frederick's Hall was without an infantry support. Bringing forward a contraband who had been recently captured, Dahlgren inquired whether or not there was infantry posted with the artillery, to which the negro replied, "Yes, massa, plenty of it." Being doubtful whether the negro knew what infantry meant, he asked him how he knew it. "Because," he said, "the infantry had stickers on the ends of their guns." Convinced by the evidence of the negro that the artillery was not unprotected, Dahlgren made a *détour* to the left, keeping beyond the range of the guns. The only loss sustained was the capture of a court-martial which was in session in a house on the enemy's line of march; whereupon a wag remarked, as the court, prisoners, and witnesses were all present, the trial might go on and the proceedings might be sent to General Long from Point Lookout or Fort Delaware. The court, however, was not reduced to this alternative, as all, with one exception, escaped during the following night.

Kilpatrick, having failed to meet Dahlgren at the appointed time before Richmond, determined not to wait, but to attack at once. He crossed the outer line of defences without resistance, but on reaching the second line he was so warmly received that he was obliged to retire, and with difficulty made good his retreat through the Confederate lines. This lack of co-operation in the Federal forces was due to the fact that Dahlgren put in the responsible position of guide a contraband who showed his

fidelity to the Southern cause by misleading him from his proposed line of march, and thus created a delay which prevented his forming a junction with Kilpatrick. We are told that the negro was executed on the alleged charge of treachery. When Dahlgren approached the neighborhood of Richmond he was met by a Confederate force and signally defeated; he himself was killed, and only a remnant of his command escaped destruction.

Colonel Beale of the Ninth Virginia cavalry thus relates the circumstance of Dahlgren's death (*Southern Historical Papers*, April, 1877):

"On reaching the route of the enemy's march, he met a home-guard company under command of Captain Richard Hugh Bagly, with several lieutenants and some privates from other regular regiments, ready to dispute the advance of the enemy. Falling back until a good position was reached, the men were posted and darkness closed in. No advance was expected, and a lieutenant was kept in command on the road. About eleven o'clock the tramp of horses was heard, and when within twenty or thirty paces the officer stationed at this point commanded, 'Halt!' The reply was, 'Disperse, you damned rebels, or I shall charge you.'—'Fire!' ordered the lieutenant, and under it the horsemen retreated rapidly. Their leader had fallen, being instantly killed as his horse wheeled. Deserted by their officers, the men next morning on the flats before the hill hoisted the white flag. Important papers were found on Colonel Dahlgren's person, consisting of an address to the command, the order of attack from the south side of the James upon the city of Richmond, enjoining the release of the prisoners, the killing of the executive officers of the Confederate Government, the burning and sacking of the city, directions where to apply for the materials necessary for setting fire to the city, and an accurate copy of the last field return of our cavalry made to General Stuart, with the location of every regiment. This last was furnished by the Bureau of Instruction at Washington. The rest was accredited to no one. We forwarded all the papers by Pollard's courier to Richmond. After the publication of the papers and the denial of their

authenticity, we were interrogated, and ordered to forward the memorandum-book, which was done."

It is but justice to the memory of Dahlgren to say that no act of cruelty was perpetrated by him throughout this hapless expedition. His soldierly spirit abhorred the duty that had been assigned him.

In the succeeding April, General Lee was directed to inquire, under flag of truce, of General Meade if he or his Government had sanctioned the barbarous orders which had been found on Colonel Dahlgren's person. A reply was received to the effect that neither the Government at Washington nor any of the commanding officers had ordered or approved of the atrocities mentioned. General Kilpatrick stated that the photographic copy of the "address" which General Lee had forwarded was a fac-simile of an address which Dahlgren had submitted to him for approval, *except* that it lacked his approval, and that the objectionable passages it contained were not in that which had been submitted to him. General Meade's disclaimer was equally candid and emphatic.

It may be mentioned here that during the period covered by the events of this chapter (in November, 1863) the City Council of Richmond passed a resolution to purchase an elegant mansion for General Lee, to replace his lost mansions of Arlington and the White House, and in token of the esteem in which he was held by the city he had so long defended. General Lee, on hearing of this offer, wrote as follows to the president of the Council:

"I assure you, sir, that no want of appreciation of the honor conferred upon me by this resolution, or insensibility to the kind feelings which prompted it, induces me to ask, as I most respectfully do, that no further proceedings be taken with reference to the subject. The house is not necessary for the use of my family, and my own duties will prevent my residence in Richmond. I should therefore be compelled to decline the generous offer, and I trust that whatever means the City Councils may have to spare for this purpose may be devoted to the relief of the families of our soldiers in the field, who are more in want of assistance, and more deserving of it, than myself."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *WILDERNESS, SPOTTSYLVANIA, AND COLD HARBOR.*

General Grant in Command of the Army of the Potomac.—Preparations for the Campaign.—New Policy.—The Overland Route Selected.—Passage of the Rapidan.—In "The Wilderness."—Grant Intercepted by Lee.—The Fight on the 5th.—The Federal Error.—Battle of the 6th.—Longstreet's Opportune Arrival.—Statement of Colonel Venable.—Hancock Repulsed.—Longstreet Wounded.—The Woods on Fire.—Graphic Descriptions of the Battle.—March for Spottsylvania Court-house.—Grant Outgeneralled.—Lee in Position.—His Able Strategy.—Battle of May 10th.—Federal Repulse.—Battle of the 12th.—Johnson's Division Captured.—Terrible Conflict.—The Federals Checked.—Deadly Character of the Conflict.—A Tree Cut down by Bullets.—Sheridan's Raid on Richmond.—Death of General Stuart.—March to the North Anna.—Lee's Brilliant Strategy.—Grant's March to the Pamunkey.—Lee on the Totopotomoy.—Battle of Cold Harbor.—Terrible Slaughter in Grant's Army.—The Men Refuse to Charge.—Losses.—Lee's Tactics.—Grant's Change of System.

THE hostile armies having remained opposed to each other for more than six months, and having frequently measured each other's strength with the skill of practised gladiators, were aware that the ensuing campaign would be one of the most formidable character. Therefore, each side made full use of its resources in preparation for the coming struggle. The North replaced the fragmentary principle on which the war had been previously conducted by a system of powerful combinations, the guidance of which was entrusted to a strong and energetic hand.

In March, 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant was appointed lieutenant-general and assigned to the command of all the Federal armies. These were formed into two grand divisions. That of the West was assigned to the command of General Sherman, while that of the East was commanded by General Grant in person. Having established his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac, he applied himself to the study of the military situation in Virginia and of the several lines of

operation which appeared worthy of consideration for the future movements of the army. While thus employed he caused the Army of the Potomac to be raised to the imposing strength of 140,000 men, and to be furnished with all the appliances necessary to place it in the highest state of efficiency. At the same time, the Army of the James, that of the Valley, and the Grand Army of the West were put in a condition to afford the most effective co-operation in support of the principal object of the campaign.

In the mean time, General Lee applied himself with his accustomed energy and far-seeing policy to the preparation of his army for the field. By recalling Longstreet from Tennessee and ordering into the ranks the convalescents and the conscripts that had been raised during the winter, and by using every other means at his disposal, he could only raise an effective force of 64,000 men. Notwithstanding this inequality of numbers, the Army of Northern Virginia on the 1st of May awaited with undaunted spirit the opposing host.

In addition to the difference in numbers there was as marked a difference in condition. The Army of the Potomac was well clothed and amply supplied. The Army of Northern Virginia was in ragged clothing and but half fed. For this condition of his troops General Lee was in no sense accountable. He had protested against it in vain: the supplies did not come. But, as on previous occasions of the kind, the soldiers were ready to fight, and were not likely to let lack of provisions affect their valor in the field.

They had before them a severer task than any they had yet experienced. General Grant had proved himself the ablest commander in the Federal army, and had come fresh from victory in the West to measure his strength with the ablest of the Confederate leaders. And their previous ill-success had taught the Federal authorities the useful lesson to leave the direction of military affairs to the commander in the field, and, while supplying him with abundant reinforcements, to cease hampering him with the incessant restrictions to which the preceding commanders had been subjected.

The new Federal general did not fail to properly estimate the



magnitude of the task before him, and he equally perceived that his skilled antagonist was not to be overcome by the policy which had hitherto been pursued. For three years a succession of pitched battles had been fought with no decisive result. The two armies still stood face to face—with a marked difference in numbers, it is true, but this was no new circumstance—and its enemies clearly realized that the army of the South was as dangerous as ever and as ready to show its teeth to its foes. General Grant, governed by these considerations, devised a new system of operations, as set forth in his official report. In this he said that his design was "*to hammer continuously against the armed force of the enemy and his resources, until by mere attrition, if by nothing else, there should be nothing left for him but an equal submission with the loyal section of our common country to the Constitution and the laws.*"

This was a policy that was sure to result in terrible loss to the Federal armies, since it threw Lee on the defensive, and his army had more than once shown a remarkable ability to defend itself against assault. "Lee's army," says a Northern writer of that period, "is an army of veterans: it is an instrument sharpened to a perfect edge. You turn its flanks—well, its flanks are made to be turned. This effects little or nothing. All that we reckon as gained, therefore, is the loss of life inflicted on the enemy." This General Grant thoroughly understood. He knew that there was but one policy by which Lee could be beaten, and estimating, in a somewhat heartless manner, that even if he lost ten men to Lee's one he could better afford the loss, he firmly resolved to pursue the "continual hammering" system until he had utterly worn away the Army of Northern Virginia and left his opponent unsupported by a single regiment of his war-worn veterans.

While fully decided to make an advance in force against Richmond, Grant had two plans of movement to consider—that of transferring his whole army, after leaving a sufficient force for the defence of Washington, to the Peninsula or to the south side of the James River, and that of pursuing the "overland route." He seems to have been at first strongly in favor

of the movement by way of the James. While in the West he had strongly urged it as the measure most promising of success. But on taking command of the Army of the Potomac he appears to have changed his views, possibly under that persistent pressure from Washington which his predecessors had so severely felt. However that may be, he determined on the southward movement through Virginia with his main army, while sending General Butler with 30,000 men to operate against Richmond from the James, and Sigel with a considerable force to advance through West Virginia and up the Shenandoah Valley.

Yet as the position of General Lee behind the Rappahannock was too strong to warrant a direct attack, it became necessary to select a line of movement that would turn this position by either the right or the left flank. The experience of General Pope had already demonstrated the dangers attending the line that traversed the upper fords of the Rapidan. Grant was therefore induced to adopt the other line—crossing the Rapidan above Lee's left, and to endeavor to turn that flank of the Confederate army. This line, besides being shorter, possessed the advantage of preserving intact the communication with Washington, while it threatened to sever Lee's connection with Richmond.

The line being decided on and the necessary preparations being completed, General Meade on the 4th of May, under the eye of General Grant, put the Army of the Potomac in motion. The corps of Sedgwick and Warren moved forward on the road to Germanna Ford, while Hancock's corps proceeded to Ely's Ford, each column being preceded by a large force of cavalry. The passage of the river was effected without opposition.

This easy passage of the Rapidan does not seem to have been anticipated by General Grant. In his report he says: "This I regarded as a great success, and it removed from my mind the most serious apprehension I had entertained, that of crossing the river in the face of an active, large, well-appointed, and ably-commanded army." Lee had made no movement to dispute the passage of the stream. He could, had he chosen, have rendered its passage extremely difficult. But perceiving that Grant was making the mistake that had proved so

disastrous to Hooker, by plunging with his army into that dense and sombre thicket well named "The Wilderness," he took care to do nothing to obstruct so desirable a result.

On reaching the southern side of the stream, Grant established himself at the intersection of the Germanna and old plank roads and at Chancellorsville. This position embraced the upper part of what is known as the Wilderness of Spottsylvania.

Lee simultaneously ordered the concentration of his forces on Mine Run, a position about four miles north-west of that occupied by Grant. The corps of Ewell and Hill and the artillery of Long and Walker gained their positions on Mine Run during the evening and night of the 4th; Longstreet's corps, which since its arrival from Tennessee had been posted at Gordonsville, distant twenty miles from the point of concentration, was necessarily delayed in reaching the scene of the coming struggle.

There seemed no good reason to believe that General Lee would risk the hazard of a fight in open field, and expose his small force to the danger of being overwhelmed by Grant's enormous army. That he would offer battle somewhere on the road to Richmond was unquestionable, but Grant naturally expected his adversary to select some point strong alike by nature and art, and which must be forced by sheer strength ere the march to Richmond could be resumed. He did not dream that Lee would himself make the attack and force a battle with no other intrenchments than the unyielding ranks of his veteran troops.

Yet Lee had already tried the woods of the Wilderness as a battlefield, and knew its advantages. Its intricacies, which were familiar to him and his generals, were unknown ground to Grant. In them he had already vanquished a large army with half its force. The natural hope of success in baffling his new opponent which this gave him he did not fail to avail himself of, and Grant found himself on his southward march unexpectedly arrested by the presence of the Confederate army in the wilds in which, just a year before, Hooker's confident army had been hurled back in defeat.

The writer spent the night of the 4th at Lee's headquarters, and breakfasted with him the next morning. The general displayed the cheerfulness which he usually exhibited at meals, and indulged in a few pleasant jests at the expense of his staff officers, as was his custom on such occasions. In the course of the conversation that attended the meal he expressed himself surprised that his new adversary had placed himself in the same predicament as "Fighting Joe" had done the previous spring. He hoped the result would be even more disastrous to Grant than that which Hooker had experienced. He was, indeed, in the best of spirits, and expressed much confidence in the result—a confidence which was well founded, for there was much reason to believe that his antagonist would be at his mercy while entangled in these pathless and entangled thickets, in whose intricacies disparity of numbers lost much of its importance.

On the morning of the 5th, Lee's army advanced in two columns, Ewell taking the Orange Court-house and Fredericksburg turnpike, while Hill moved on the plank road. After advancing about three miles, Ewell encountered the enemy's outposts. Jones's brigade and a battery of artillery were then placed in position to cover the further deployment of Ewell's corps. Rodes's division formed in line to the right and at right angles to the road. The divisions of Early and Edward Johnson executed a similar deployment to the left.

Before this movement was finished Jones's brigade was ordered to change its position, and while in the execution of this was suddenly attacked by a heavy Federal force which had advanced unobserved under cover of a dense thicket. Before it could be extricated General Jones, its gallant leader, was killed, with the loss of several hundred of his men, either killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. This was the prelude to a succession of battles.

About four o'clock in the afternoon a collision occurred between the Federal right and the Confederate left. The hostile forces were concealed from view by a wilderness of tangled brushwood until they were within musket-range of each other. Then the Confederates, being in position, were prepared to

deliver a staggering volley the moment their antagonists appeared, which was followed up so persistently that the Federals were driven back with heavy loss for nearly a mile. This affair closed the operations on the left.

On the right Hill met the enemy on the plank road and engaged in a heavy conflict. Hancock, who was opposed to him, made desperate efforts to drive him from his position, but in vain. "The assaults," as General Lee wrote, "were heavy and desperate, but every one was repulsed." Night fell, leaving both parties in the position which they held at the beginning of the fight. Neither had advanced or retired, but Hill had held his post and established his connection with Ewell.

The two armies had now assumed a most singular attitude. They had enveloped themselves in a jungle of tangled brush-wood so dense that they were invisible to each other at half musket-range, and along the lines of battle in many places objects were not discernible half the length of a battalion. A Northern writer aptly described this region as a "terra incognita." It formerly had been an extensive mining district, from which the timber had been cut to supply fuel for feeding the smelting-furnaces, and since then the young growth had sprung up ten times thicker than the primeval forest. The roads traversing it and the small brooks meandering through it, with a few diminutive clearings, were the only openings in this dismal wilderness.

As soon as General Grant had crossed the Rapidan and enveloped himself in the Wilderness of Spottsylvania, General Lee determined, as above said, to bring his adversary to an engagement in a position whose difficulties neutralized the vastly superior force against him. "Neither General Grant nor General Meade believed that aught but a small force was in front of Warren to mask the Confederate retreat, as it was not deemed possible that Lee, after his defensive line had been turned, could have acted with such boldness as to launch forward his army in an offensive sally. It was therefore at once resolved to brush away or capture this force, but as this determination was formed under a very erroneous apprehension of

the actual situation, the means employed were inadequate to the task" (Swinton).

In corroboration of this statement may be quoted a remark ascribed to General Meade in conversation with Warren, Sedgwick, and others on the morning of the 5th: "They have left a division to fool us here, while they concentrate and prepare a position toward the North Anna; and what I want is to prevent those fellows from getting back to Mine Run."

Before nightfall of that day it was discovered that "those fellows" had other objects in view, and were not to be brushed away with a wave of the hand. Grant had become convinced that Lee was advancing upon him in force, and hastened to put his whole army in battle array. His line, crossing the plank road and old turnpike nearly at right angles, extended from Todd's Tavern on Brock road to within a short distance of Germanna Ford, presenting a front of about five miles.

General Lee had accompanied the advance of Hill on the plank road, and witnessed the noble firmness with which the divisions of Heth and Wilcox maintained the conflict against greatly superior odds until relieved by the coming of night. Perceiving that these troops had sustained considerable loss and were greatly fatigued by the exertions of the day, he wished to relieve them by Longstreet's corps, which had bivouacked during the evening about five miles from the field of battle. He therefore sent a message to General Longstreet to hurry him forward.

Notwithstanding the severe conflicts during the day, the troops of both Ewell and Hill maintained their unshaken courage, and lay upon their arms during the night in anticipation of a renewal of the attack.

Early on the following morning Hill's division was assailed with increased vigor, so heavy a pressure being brought to bear upon Heth and Wilcox that they were driven back, and, owing to the difficulties of the country, were thrown into confusion. The failure of Longstreet to appear came near causing a serious disaster to the army. But at this critical moment he arrived and attacked with such vigor that the enemy was driven back and the position regained.

Colonel C. S. Venable of General Lee's staff, in his address before the Southern Historical Society, thus describes this event: "The assertion, made by several writers, that Hill's troops were driven back a mile and a half is a most serious mistake. The right of his line was thrown back several hundred yards, but a portion of his troops still maintained their position. The danger, however, was great, and General Lee sent his trusted adjutant, Colonel W. H. Taylor, back to Parker's Store to get the trains ready for a movement to the rear. He sent an aide also to hasten the march of Longstreet's divisions. These came the last mile and a half at a double-quick, in parallel columns, along the plank road.

"General Longstreet rode forward with that imperturbable coolness which always characterized him in times of perilous action, and began to put them in position on the right and left of the road. His men came to the front of the disordered battle with a steadiness unexampled even among veterans, and with an *élan* that presaged restoration of our position and certain victory. When they arrived the bullets of the enemy on our right flank had begun to sweep the field in the rear of the artillery-pits on the left of the road, where General Lee was giving directions and assisting General Hill in rallying and re-forming his troops.

"It was here that the incident of Lee's charge with Gregg's Texas brigade occurred. The Texans cheered lustily as their line of battle, coming up in splendid style, passed by Wilcox's disordered columns and swept across our artillery-pit and its adjacent breastwork. Much moved by the greeting of these brave men and their magnificent behavior, General Lee spurred his horse through an opening in the trenches and followed close on their line as it moved rapidly forward. The men did not perceive that he was going with them until they had advanced some distance in the charge. When they did recognize him, there came from the entire line as it rushed on the cry, 'Go back, General Lee! go back!' Some historians like to put this in less homely words, but the brave Texans did not pick their phrases: 'We won't go on unless you go back.' A sergeant seized his bridle-rein. . . .

"Just then I turned his attention to General Longstreet, whom he had been seeking, and who sat on his horse on a knoll to the right of the Texans directing the attack of his divisions. He yielded with evident reluctance to the entreaties of his men, and rode up to Longstreet's position. With the first opportunity I informed General Longstreet of what had just happened, and he with affectionate bluntness urged General Lee to go farther back. I need not say the Texans went forward in their charge and did well their duty. They were eight hundred strong, and lost half their number killed and wounded on that bloody day. The battle was soon restored and the enemy driven to his position of the night before."

Wilcox's and Heth's divisions, to whom Longstreet's arrival and General Lee's presence had done much to restore confidence, were placed in line a short distance to the left of the plank road. Shortly afterward Anderson's division arrived from Orange Court-house. Longstreet now advanced from his own and Anderson's divisions three brigades to operate on the right flank of the enemy, while himself advancing on their front.

Attacked with great vigor by these fresh troops and his right flank rolled up at the same time that a heavy onslaught fell upon his front, Hancock's force was completely defeated, and sent reeling back toward the Brock road, the important highway to the seizure of which Lee's efforts were directed. That this purpose would be achieved seemed highly probable when an unfortunate accident put a stop to the Confederate advance. General Longstreet, who afterward declared that he "thought that he had another Bull Run on them," had ridden forward with his staff in front of his advancing line, when he was fired upon by a portion of his own flanking column, who mistook the party for Federal cavalry. He was struck by a musket-ball, and fell from his horse severely wounded.

This accident—which, as will be seen, bears a striking resemblance to that in which Lee's other great lieutenant, Jackson, was disabled in a previous battle in that same region—threw the lines into disorder and put a stop to the advance. General Lee, as soon as he learned of the accident, hastened



to the spot to take command of the corps. But a considerable time elapsed before the divisions were ready for a renewal of the assault, and in the mean time the enemy had recovered from his confusion and had been strongly reinforced.

The battle was renewed about four o'clock in the afternoon, the columns of Longstreet and Hill, now commanded by Lee in person, making a most vigorous assault upon Hancock's men, who now lay intrenched behind a strongly-built breast-work of logs. The battle raged with great fury. The incessant volleys set fire to the woods, as at Chancellorsville, and flames and smoke soon filled the valley in which the contest was raging. The flames ere long caught to the breastworks of the enemy, which were soon a mass of seething fire. The battle went on through smoke and flame, and a portion of the breastworks were carried, though they were not long held. The few who had entered them were quickly driven out by a forward rush of a Federal brigade. With this charge ended the main action of the day.

In this engagement the attack of General Meade was conducted with such vigor by Hancock, Warren, and Burnside that under ordinary circumstances, with his great superiority of force, it would have been successful; but here the difficulties of the country prevented his making systematic combinations, and failure was the consequence.

While the battle was in progress on our right a spirited combat ensued between a part of Ewell's and Sedgwick's corps which terminated without important results. General Grant, being satisfied that any further attempt to dislodge Lee would be fruitless, determined to draw him out by a change of position. Therefore on the 7th he made his preparations to withdraw by night toward Spottsylvania Court-house.

Before ending our account of the battle of the Wilderness it may be of interest to offer some extracts from other writers which present graphic pictures of the singular and terrible character of the conflict. A Northern writer describes the country as covered by "a dense undergrowth of low-limbed and scraggy pines, stiff and bristling chinkapins, scrub oaks, and hazel. It is a region of gloom and the shadow of death.

Manceuvring here was necessarily out of the question, and only Indian tactics told. The troops could only receive direction by a point of the compass, for not only were the lines of battle entirely hidden from the sight of the commander, but no officer could see ten files on each side of him. Artillery was wholly ruled out of use; the massive concentration of three hundred guns stood silent, and only an occasional piece or section could be brought into play in the roadsides. Cavalry was still more useless. But in that horrid thicket there lurked two hundred thousand men, and through it lurid fires played, and, though no array of battle could be seen, there came out of its depths the roll and crackle of musketry like the noisy boiling of some hell-caldron that told the dread story of death."

A Southern writer describes the struggle in equally vivid language: "The land was sombre—a land of thicket, undergrowth, jungle, ooze, where men could not see each other twenty yards off, and assault had to be made by the compass. The fights there were not as easy as night-attacks in open country, for at night you can travel by the stars. Death came unseen; regiments stumbled on each other, and sent swift destruction into each other's ranks guided by the crackling of the bushes. It was not war—military manceuvring; science had as little to do with it as sight. Two wild animals were hunting each other; when they heard each other's steps they sprang and grappled. The conqueror advanced or went elsewhere. . . . Here, in blind wrestle as at midnight, did two hundred thousand men in blue and gray clutch each other—bloodiest and weirdest of encounters. . . . On the low line of the works, dimly seen in the thickets, rested the muzzles spouting flame; from the depths rose cheers; charges were made and repulsed, the lines scarcely seeing each other; men fell and writhed and died unseen, their bodies lost in the bushes, their death-groans drowned in the steady, continuous, never-ceasing crash."

During the battle the numerous cavalry of Grant's army, commanded by General Sheridan, was completely neutralized by the topographical difficulties of the country. Becoming impatient of its inaction, a portion of Wilson's division passed the Brock road and advanced a short distance into the open

country, where it was met by General Rosser with his brigade, and after a sharp conflict was compelled to retreat into the Wilderness from which it had emerged. The country was equally unfavorable for the use of artillery, which could only be employed along the roads or fired at random in the direction of the sounds of battle. The infantry, being thus deprived of its two powerful auxiliaries, was compelled to grapple single-handed its resolute antagonist. The casualties of both armies during the 5th and 6th were heavy. The Confederates, besides the loss of 7000 men killed and wounded, had to lament the severe wound of General Longstreet, which disabled him during the remainder of the campaign, and the death of Colonel J. Thompson Brown of the artillery and the gallant General Jenkins of South Carolina. The Federal loss was much greater.

During the 7th the battle was not resumed and the day passed in comparative quiet. General Lee waited behind his slight intrenchments for an assault from the Federal army, though keenly on the alert for a possible southward march of Grant's columns. Grant, indeed, designed by a rapid flank movement to seize the important position of Spottsylvania Court-house, fifteen miles south-east of the Wilderness battlefield. But quick as he was, his antagonist proved too active for him.

Having been informed by Stuart on the afternoon of the 7th that the wagon-trains of the Federal army were moving southward, Lee at once divined Grant's intention, and he hastily took the necessary measures to forestall it. He ordered Longstreet's corps, then commanded by General R. H. Anderson, to proceed that night, by a circuitous route a few miles to the right of the left flank of the enemy, to Spottsylvania Court-house, situated on the main route to Richmond. While Anderson was in rapid progress toward that point, the Federal army was advancing in two columns for the same place—the one by the Brock road, and the other by way of Chancellorsville. By reason of the numerous difficulties to be encountered, and the steady opposition of Stuart's men, who behind improvised breastworks harassed the Federal advance at every step, the movement was so much retarded that the advance corps under Warren did not reach the neighborhood of Spott-

sylvania Court-house until about the middle of the forenoon of the 8th.

The Confederate cavalry, under Fitz Lee, yielded before the strong advance of Warren's leading division. At that opportune moment Anderson reached the field, and as the cavalry gave way the Federals found themselves unexpectedly confronted by a line of infantry and met by a severe musketry fire, which took them so greatly by surprise that they hastily fell back to a position a mile and a half north of the court-house. Lee had again outgeneralled his opponent, and placed his army, which was supposed to be fifteen miles in the rear, squarely across Grant's line of advance to Richmond, prepared to dispute the road with the same energy it had displayed in the Wilderness battle.

The appearance of Longstreet's corps under these conditions naturally astounded the Federals, and forced them to retire in dismayed confusion. Anderson then took his position on a range of hills partly encircling the village on the north and north-east, and distant from it about a mile. The Federal corps, as they slowly arrived, finding Lee in their front, took up a position without attempting to dislodge him. Early, who had been assigned to the command of the Third corps during the temporary illness of Hill, and Ewell with his corps, having been directed to follow Anderson as rapidly as circumstances would permit, arrived late in the afternoon and established themselves in strong positions. Thus General Lee had passed entirely around the Army of the Potomac, and planted himself so firmly across its path to Richmond that he could not be dislodged by the repeated efforts of Grant.

The operations of the last four days furnish a page of military history of striking singularity. General Lee, on finding his position turned, to the surprise of Grant did not retreat, but introduced an exception to the rules of war of startling audacity. On the 5th, at the head of only Ewell's corps and two divisions of Hill's, he boldly advanced and hurled the gage of battle at his antagonist in defiance of his army of 140,000 men; and on the 6th, with less than half his force, inflicted such stunning blows that on the 8th he was able to

swing entirely around him and plant himself firmly across his path at Spottsylvania Court-house, completely reversing the positions of the two armies, and bringing Richmond again under the wing of its ever-watchful protector.

This eccentricity of General Lee must have inspired General Grant with the opinion that was expressed of Bonaparte by an Austrian general of the martinettish school, who, on being asked what he thought of the state of the war, replied: "Nothing can be worse on your side. Here you have a youth who absolutely knows nothing of the rules of war. To-day he is in our rear, to-morrow on our flank, next day again in our front. Such gross violations of the principles of the art of war are not to be supported" (Bourrienne).

Before proceeding with our narrative it is important to give a short description of the new field of operations. Spottsylvania Court-house is situated at the junction of the Fredericksburg and Louisa Court-house road with the main road to Richmond. About a mile to the north and north-east is a range of hills that, as above said, had become the Confederate position. To the east of the court-house and parallel to Richmond road is another ridge, about a mile in length, which abruptly terminates near a third ridge of considerable elevation nearly parallel with and about six hundred yards in rear of the Confederate right. To the south and south-west the country is level or moderately undulating. The whole face of the country is diversified by farms and bodies of timber of considerable extent.

The Army of the Potomac being still surrounded by topographical difficulties of such magnitude as to render manœuvring hazardous and difficult, General Grant was obliged to extricate it from a false position by desperate fighting. He therefore formed his plans with that view, and proceeded to execute them with unsurpassed energy. No aggressive operations of importance were projected on the 9th. The opposing hosts during that interval were chiefly occupied in strengthening their positions, to which they applied themselves so diligently that by the close of the day each army was covered by a continuous line of formidable breastworks.

On the morning of the 10th, General Grant formed a powerful combination of the corps of Warren, Burnside, and Hancock with the design of attacking Lee's left centre near the point of junction of the corps of Longstreet and Ewell. Shortly after 10 A. M. a severe attack was made upon this position, which was met with great intrepidity and repulsed with severe loss. At 3 P. M. a second assault was made, which was similarly repulsed with heavy slaughter. These efforts were preliminary to the main attack, which was ordered for five o'clock.

Hancock's corps, which had crossed the Po on the preceding day, and advanced during the morning against the Confederate lines, had been ordered back to take part in the main assault. While retiring across the stream it was vigorously assailed, and both sides lost heavily. During this contest the woods in the rear of the Federal troops and between them and the river took fire, and many of the wounded perished in the flames. With a fierce foe in front and a burning forest in the rear Hancock's men found themselves in a critical situation, and were very severely handled in the effort to extricate themselves. On crossing the stream they destroyed the bridges, and thus checked the Confederate pursuit.

At five o'clock the main assault was made. Hancock's and Warren's men advanced with great intrepidity against the strong Confederate works, but were repulsed with terrible slaughter. After barely sufficient time to reorganize the shattered columns another attack was made. This met with a still more bloody reception. The Confederate loss in the two assaults was inconsiderable, while from 5000 to 6000 of the Federal forces lay dead and wounded upon the field.

Throughout the day the divisions of Heth, Field, Kershaw, and Wilcox, with the artillery of Alexander and Walker, maintained a firmness and displayed a valor that well became veterans of a hundred battles. The Army of the Potomac never fought with more desperate courage, nor had its ranks ever been visited with such frightful havoc.

In the afternoon, about five o'clock, the Sixth corps made a heavy attack on Ewell's left, which was urged with such per-

sistency that the portion of the line held by Doles's brigade was broken, and the exultant assailants rushed through the breach in heavy masses. But this gallant brigade being quickly rallied and promptly supported by the brigades of Daniel, Gordon, and G. H. Steuart, the assailants were forced back with terrible slaughter. After their repulse the Federals discontinued the attack, leaving the ground thickly strewn with killed and wounded. The breach which had been the scene of so sanguinary a struggle was immediately closed and Ewell's line was entirely re-established. On this occasion General Daniel of North Carolina was killed while bravely leading his troops, and Major Watson of the artillery was mortally wounded. The loss of these officers was deeply regretted. In this engagement the Army of Northern Virginia occupied a position of great natural strength and fortified by strong breastworks. For this reason the Confederate loss was very small as compared with that of the Federals, who had essayed an impossible task and had met with a terrible repulse.

During the hottest portion of this engagement, when the Federals were pouring through the broken Confederate lines and disaster seemed imminent, General Lee rode forward and took his position at the head of General Gordon's column, then preparing to charge. Perceiving that it was his intention to lead the charge, Gordon spurred hastily to his side, seized the reins of his horse and excitedly cried,

"General Lee, this is no place for you. Do go to the rear. These are Virginians and Georgians, sir—men who have never failed—and they will not fail now.—Will you, boys? Is it necessary for General Lee to lead this charge?"

"No! no! General Lee to the rear! General Lee to the rear!" cried the men. "We will drive them back if General Lee will only go to the rear."

As Lee retired Gordon put himself at the head of his division and cried out in his ringing voice, "Forward! charge! and remember your promise to General Lee!"

The charge that followed was fierce and telling, and the Federals who had entered the lines were hurled back before the resolute advance of Gordon's gallant men. The works

were retaken, the Confederate line again established, and an impending disaster converted into a brilliant victory.

During the 11th, General Grant was employed in shifting the positions of his corps preparatory to a new assault upon the Confederate lines. Before daylight on the morning of the 12th his army assailed a portion of the Confederate lines, which was carried, with the capture of several thousand prisoners. It is proper, before describing this affair, to relate the circumstances which led to it. In the afternoon of the 11th, General Lee, having received intelligence that induced him to suspect that Grant was taking another step toward Richmond, directed that the army should be held in readiness to make a night-movement in case his apprehensions were correct. This involved the removal before dark of such artillery as might embarrass or retard a withdrawal from the lines at night. With this view two batteries were withdrawn from an advanced salient on Ewell's front in the dusk of evening with as much caution as possible to prevent observation. Notwithstanding the intended secrecy of the removal of these two batteries, the fact was conveyed, as it was afterward stated, to the enemy that night by a deserter from Johnson's division.

The weakening of the Confederate lines is supposed to have determined the Federal commander to make a night-attack, which General Hancock executed with his accustomed vigor a little before daylight on the 12th. Although the preparations for the attack had been heard by General Johnson, and the artillery had been recalled, the darkness of the night was so intensified by a thick fog that the attacking column was able to advance unobserved, to break through Johnson's line, and to capture his whole division, with about twenty pieces of artillery, almost without a struggle. The artillery that had been left on the line fired only two guns, while the infantry offered little resistance.

This success inaugurated one of the most desperate conflicts that occurred during the war. The long breach made by the capture of Johnson's division admitted the Federals in heavy masses, which were promptly arrested by Ramseur's, Rodes's, and Gordon's infantry and Long's artillery. These troops,



stretching across the base of the salient, confined the assailants within its triangular area, while the artillery from the surrounding hills hurled deadly missiles upon them.

For several hours the dense fog, hovering like a black curtain around the combatants, concealed all knowledge of the raging strife excepting as it was proclaimed by the deafening roar of musketry and the thunder of artillery. From four o'clock in the morning until night the battle continued, marked by terrible slaughter. The diminished ranks on each side were constantly refilled with fresh troops. General Lee sent during the day to the assistance of Rodes, on whose front the battle raged, three brigades (McGowan's South Carolina, Perrin's Alabama, and Harris's Mississippi), while the artillery was reinforced by the battalions of Cabell and McIntosh. Hancock was reinforced by the Sixth corps and the two divisions of Warren's corps.

While Hancock's attack was in progress General Grant attempted to create a diversion in his favor by threatening the Confederate position on his right and left, which was, however, promptly repelled by the troops of Early and Anderson. An important diversion was made during the day on the right by Mahone of Hill's corps, which resulted in the capture of several hundred prisoners. At last the persistent attacks of the enemy were obliged to yield to constant repulse and the Federals discontinued the contest.

"Of all the struggles of the war, this was perhaps the fiercest and most deadly. Frequently throughout the conflict so close was the fight that the rival standards were planted on opposite sides of the breastworks. The enemy's most savage sallies were directed to retake the famous salient, which was now become an angle of death and presented a spectacle ghastly and terrible. On the Confederate side of the works lay many corpses of those who had been bayoneted by Hancock's men when they first leaped the intrenchments. To these were constantly added the bravest of those who in the assaults to recapture the position fell at the margin of the works, till the ground was literally covered with piles of dead and the woods in front of the salient were one hideous Golgotha" (Swinton).

As had happened on the 10th, so on this day General Lee rode to the head of a column prepared to charge at a moment when the need of desperate valor was urgent. As on the previous occasion, the men refused to move unless he would retire, calling out, as with one voice, "If you will go back, General Lee, we will do all you desire." It was under such circumstances as this that General Lee, by his readiness to share their dangers, endeared himself to his men. The assertion has been made, however, that he exposed himself purposely, courting death through sheer despair of success. This idea is utterly unfounded. On the occasions mentioned his army was in no more serious danger than it had been twenty times before. His presence and action were necessary to stimulate the men to greater deeds of valor. It had become a question of victory or defeat, and any general may excusably expose himself when the fate of a battle hangs upon a thread. In the writer's experience General Lee never unnecessarily courted danger, though he never cautiously avoided it. It was always his custom to make a personal examination of the movements in progress, as he always wished to avoid any reckless exposure of his men. This habit frequently brought him under the fire of the enemy. But he never had a thought of self-destruction, even in the most desperate situations, and never exposed himself recklessly or unnecessarily, though no consideration of personal safety ever deterred him from the full performance of the duties which necessarily devolve upon a commanding general.

On reviewing the results of the day it was apparent that the Federal success in the morning was more than counterbalanced by subsequent losses in killed and wounded. In this respect there was a great disparity between Lee's and Grant's armies. The Federal losses in killed, wounded, and missing up to the 11th of May, by Grant's own estimate, reached the aggregate of 20,000 men. On the 12th the losses were fully 10,000 more. Other statements make the losses much more considerable. The Confederate losses, though severe, were much less, this being due to the fact that the Confederates were protected by secure breastworks, from behind which they could with comparative safety repel the assailants. At night General

Ewell withdrew to a range of hills a little in rear of his first position, which formed a shorter and stronger line, where he prepared to meet other attacks. But of these there was no immediate danger. The succession of bloody combats which had marked the career of Grant in the Wilderness had by this time so greatly reduced his army that he was obliged to pause and await reinforcements.

A singular incident of the battle of the 12th has often been told, yet is still worth relating. The musketry fire during this engagement had never been exceeded in intensity. From both sides came an incessant, deadly hail of bullets, so continuous and close that every shrub and tree between the lines was pierced and scarred, and one hickory tree, of eighteen inches diameter, was so chipped away by the storm of lead as to be scarcely able to stand. The first gust of wind levelled it to the earth. It was literally cut down by musket-balls. This trunk is now preserved at Washington as a memento of the war.

General Grant remained inactive until about the 18th, when a strong force advanced toward the new line of Lee's army. "When well within range General Long opened upon them with thirty pieces of artillery, which, with the fire of our skirmishers, broke and drove them back with severe loss. We afterward learned that they were two fresh divisions, nearly 10,000 strong, just come up from the rear" (*Ewell's Report*).

On the 19th, General Lee directed Ewell to demonstrate against the enemy in his front, as he believed that he was moving to his right. Finding the Federals in his front to be strongly intrenched, Ewell was compelled to move round their right—a task which proved very difficult, there being many obstacles in the route. This delay gave the enemy, who had perceived his movement, time to prepare to meet him, and on reaching the desired point he found himself assailed by a superior force. He maintained his ground, however, until night-fall, when he retreated and regained his former position, having lost about 900 men in the movement.

During the operations about Spottsylvania Court-house, Sheridan conceived the idea of capturing Richmond by a *coup de main*, and on the 9th proceeded to its execution. Of

this movement General Stuart quickly became aware, and with his usual promptitude threw himself in Sheridan's path, and encountered him on the 10th at the Yellow Tavern, a few miles north of Richmond. A severe conflict ensued, in which Stuart fell mortally wounded, and his troops were compelled to retire before the superior numbers of the foe.

This contest between the two ablest cavalry leaders of the war led, in the fall of General Stuart, to a severe disaster to the Confederate cause. "Endowed by nature with a courage that shrank from nothing; active, energetic, of immense physical stamina, which enabled him to endure any amount of fatigue; devoted, heart and soul, to the cause in which he fought, and looking up to the commander of the army with child-like love and admiration,—Stuart could be ill spared at this critical moment, and General Lee was plunged into the deepest melancholy at the intelligence of his death. When it reached him he retired from those around him, and remained for some time communing with his own heart and memory. When one of his staff entered and spoke of Stuart, General Lee said, in a low voice, 'I can scarcely think of him without weeping'" (Cooke).

Sheridan had been so much delayed by Stuart's assault that the small force which had been left for the defence of Richmond had time to reach the works, which were very feebly garrisoned on Sheridan's first approach. He carried the first line, but recoiled from the second, and retired toward the Chickahominy. He subsequently rejoined Grant on the Pamunkey.

About the same time that the Confederate army lost its great cavalry leader—a loss which can only be paralleled with that of Jackson—the Federal army was afflicted with a loss little less felt in the death of General Sedgwick. Always noble as a man and gallant as a soldier, in time of peace his generous heart was as unfailing in friendly sympathy as his valiant spirit in the time of war was ready to call forth the admiration and respect of his companions.

Referring to the operations just related, the historian of the Army of the Potomac says: "Before the lines of Spottsylvania the Army of the Potomac had for twelve days and nights

engaged in a fierce wrestle in which it had done all that valor may do to carry a position by nature and art impregnable. In this contest, unparalleled in its continuous fury and swelling to the proportions of a campaign, language is inadequate to convey an impression of the labors, fatigues, and sufferings of the troops, who fought by day only to march by night from point to point of the long line, and renew the fight on the morrow. Above 40,000 men had already fallen in the bloody encounters of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, and the exhausted army began to lose its spirits. It was with joy, therefore, that it at length turned its back upon the lines of Spottsylvania."

In no previous operations did the Army of Northern Virginia display higher soldierly qualities. Regardless of numbers, every breach was filled, and with unparalleled stubbornness its lines were maintained. The soldiers of that army not only gratified their countrymen, but by their gallantry and vigor won the admiration of their enemies. Wherever the men in blue appeared they were met by those in gray, and muzzle to muzzle and point to point they measured the foeman's strength.

No further effort was made by Grant on the desperately-fought field of Spottsylvania. Having been reinforced by 40,000 reserves, on the 20th of May he disappeared from the front of Lee's army. As in the Wilderness, he began a movement to turn the impregnable position of Spottsylvania by a flank march.

General Lee, however, with his usual alertness, had his men on the march the instant the movement of his adversary was discovered, and he advanced with such rapidity as to reach Hanover Junction, at the intersection of the Fredericksburg and Richmond and the Central railroads, in advance of Grant. This objective point of the Federal army was occupied by Lee on the 22d. He at once took up a strong position, and when Grant arrived on the 23d it was to find himself again intercepted by his active opponent.

The North Anna River, which here formed the Confederate line of defence, was strongly guarded, and Grant's immediate effort to throw his army across it met with strong resistance.

Warren on the right, indeed, found an unguarded ford, and succeeded in crossing his whole corps without opposition. A severe conflict ensued, which ended in his strongly establishing himself. But Hancock's effort to cross on the left met with considerable opposition, and was not achieved without loss.

On the succeeding day Burnside endeavored to cross at a point intermediate between those adopted by Warren and Hancock. He met with severe loss in the effort, and found the river very strongly guarded. Lee's army, in fact, now occupied a singular position. Its centre touched the stream, while both wings were thrown back at an obtuse angle, facing the corps of Warren and Hancock respectively. To quote again from Swinton: "The game of war seldom presents a more effectual checkmate than was here given by Lee; for after Grant had made the brilliantly successful passage of the North Anna, the Confederate commander, thrusting his centre between the two wings of the Army of the Potomac, put his antagonist at an enormous disadvantage, and compelled him, for the reinforcement of one or the other wing, to make a double passage of the river."

Warren's corps advanced with the view of striking the Central Railroad, a few miles above the junction, but was met by Hill and driven back with loss. The corps that had crossed the river remained several days without manifesting any inclination to advance, and were then withdrawn to the north side of the stream, the movement being performed at night and with the greatest caution and secrecy. General Grant on this occasion did not exhibit his usual pertinacity, but seemed satisfied by observation alone that the Confederate position could not be carried by main strength. He therefore proceeded down the North Anna to the Pamunkey, which he crossed on the 28th. Grant thus explains his withdrawal from before Hanover Junction: "Finding the enemy's position on the North Anna stronger than either of his previous ones, I withdrew on the night of the 26th to the north bank of the North Anna" (Report).

At this time the Federal army, with the reinforcements it had received during its march, numbered 100,000 men, while

the Confederate army, whose only reinforcement had been 6000 men under Breckenridge and Pickett, received on the North Anna, did not exceed 40,000 men. According to Colonel Taylor's estimate, the total reinforcements received by Lee from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor numbered 14,400 men, while during the same period Grant was strengthened by more than 50,000 additional men.

In addition to this, all the aids of science and art were brought into use in the Army of the Potomac to an extent impossible to Lee. In Grant's *Memoirs* he gives a detailed account of the perfection of his signal system, by which at every halt of the army telegraphic wires were immediately laid along the whole line, so that in a short time after encamping each corps and division was connected with the others and with headquarters by a telegraphic network, making of the whole extended army a single body under instant control of the brain of the commander through these outstretching iron nerves. Other points of superiority which his unlimited command of resources gave the Federal commander might be named, but the above will suffice to show the disadvantages under which Lee labored, and against which he could only oppose the valor of his men and his own original genius as a commander.

The disparity of numbers between the two armies had prevented Lee from taking advantage of Grant's flank march from Spottsylvania to attack him under the advantageous circumstances which such a movement presents, and forced him to the alternative of seeking to check his advance at strong defensive points. The movement of Grant to the Pamunkey was met by Lee in the same manner as before, by an intercepting march to the line of the Totopotomoy, a small tributary of the Mattaponi, where the adjacent hills afford a good defensive position. Lee's purpose in this movement was the following: If he had marched so as to detain Grant on the Pamunkey, the latter would have held command of the James and York rivers, and would have been at liberty to reinforce Butler, who was operating on the James. By this means Butler might have been strengthened sufficiently to crush the Con-

federate force which was operating against him, and thus have become at liberty to co-operate with Grant against Lee or to capture Richmond before it could be relieved. On the other hand, if Grant could be detained on the line of the Totopotomoy he would be unable to send detachments to Butler unobserved, and Lee, by his closer vicinity to Richmond, would be better able to obtain the co-operation of the troops employed in the defence of that place.

Proceeding on his march from the Pamunkey, Grant found his advance upon Richmond again arrested by Lee, who awaited him, as above said, on the Totopotomoy in the neighborhood of Mechanicsville and Atlee's Station on the Central Railroad. Grant did not at this point attempt to force his opponent from his path, but moved slowly by his left flank toward the Chickahominy, while Lee, by a similar movement to his right, kept pace with him and constantly confronted him at every stage.

Both armies carefully protected themselves with breastworks until a flank of each rested upon the Chickahominy. On the 1st of June, Lee was joined by about 5000 men under Pickett and Hoke, who had been operating against Butler on the south side of the James. This increased his army to 45,000 men. At the same time Butler reinforced Grant with 12,000 men, raising his numerical strength to 112,000.

The old battlefield of Cold Harbor was again occupied by the contending forces, though in an inverse order. The Confederate right now occupied the position that had been previously held by the Federals, and the Federal left held that which had been occupied by the Confederates. This field was about to become the theatre of a second conflict more desperate than the first.

Apparently with the intention of blotting out the memory of the defeat of the Federal arms on the former occasion, General Grant massed the flower of his army for battle. A portion of the Confederate line occupied the edge of a swamp of several hundred yards in length and breadth, enclosed by a low semicircular ridge covered with brushwood. On the previous night the troops assigned to this part of the line, finding the ground wet and miry, withdrew to the encircling ridge, leav-



ing the breastworks to be held by their picket-line. The attacking column quickly carried this part of the line, and advanced through the mud and water until arrested by the deliberate fire of the Confederates.

The battle that succeeded was one of the most desperately contested and murderous engagements of the war. Along the whole Federal line a simultaneous assault was made on the Confederate works, and at every point with the same disastrous result. Rank after rank was swept away until the column of assault was almost annihilated. Attack after attack was made, and men fell in myriads before the murderous fire from the Confederate line. While Hill, Breckenridge, Anderson, and Pickett repulsed Grant's desperate assaults upon the right, Early with Rodes, Gordon, and Ramseur on the left successfully opposed Burnside and Warren. In the brief space of one hour the bloody battle of the 3d of June was over, and 13,000 dead and wounded Federals lay in front of the lines behind which little more than 1000 of the Confederate force had fallen.

A few hours afterward orders were sent to the corps commanders to renew the assault, and transmitted by them through the intermediate channels to the men. Then an event occurred which has seldom been witnessed on a battlefield, yet which testified most emphatically to the silent judgment of the men on the useless slaughter to which they had been subjected. Though the orders to advance were given, not a man stirred. The troops stood silent, but immovable, presenting in this unmistakable protest the verdict of the rank and file against the murderous work decided on by their commanders.

Thus ended Grant's overland campaign, in which his losses aggregated the enormous total of 60,000 men—a greater number than the whole of Lee's army at the beginning of the campaign. Lee's losses, on the contrary, were not more than 20,000. As to the *morale* of the two armies, that of Lee's continued excellent. Their successful defence against their powerful opponent had raised the spirits of the men and their confidence in their general to the highest pitch. On the contrary, the dreadful slaughter to which Grant's army had been

subjected produced an inevitable sense of depression in the ranks, and a feeling that they were destined to destruction before the terrible blows of their able antagonist.

It is an error to suppose that in this campaign Lee was afraid to meet his adversary in open field, as has been asserted by Northern writers. He was always ready for action, whether offensive or defensive, under favorable circumstances. "I happen to know," says General Early, "that General Lee had always the greatest anxiety to strike at Grant in the open field." It was the practice of both armies, whenever encamping, to build intrenchments, and it would have been utter folly for Lee to leave his when he found his antagonist willing to attack him behind his breastworks, thus giving him that advantage of a defensive position which the smallness of his army imperatively demanded. Had he advanced against Grant, it would only have been to find the latter behind his works, and the comparative size of the two armies did not warrant this reversal of the conditions of the contest.

At the beginning of the campaign, perceiving that General Grant's *rôle* was fighting and not manœuvring, General Lee restrained his desire for the bold and adventurous offensive and strictly confined himself to the defensive, hoping in the course of events to reduce his opponent sufficiently near a physical equality to warrant his attacking him openly with reasonable hope of success. Believing that object had been accomplished after the battle of Cold Harbor, General Lee was anxious to assume the offensive and attack Grant before his army could recover from the stunning effect of its defeat on that occasion; but being obliged to send a large detachment from his army to oppose Sigel and Hunter in the Valley, he was compelled to continue on the defensive.

Grant, on his part, had been taught a costly lesson by his many bloody repulses, and after the battle of Cold Harbor changed his whole plan of operations, deciding to endeavor to accomplish by patient siege what he had failed to achieve by the reckless application of force. With this decision began a new chapter in the history of the war, and one of the most remarkable sieges known to history was inaugurated—that in

which the Confederate commander behind the breastworks of Petersburg for a full year baffled every effort of his powerful foe, and taught the world that General Lee was as great in defence as he had already proved himself in offence, and, in the fullest sense of the phrase, was "every inch a soldier."

In conclusion of this chapter the following extracts from letters written by General Lee to Miss Margaret Stuart are of great interest, as showing his feeling in regard to the coming struggle and his natural sense of uncertainty as to its result. On the 29th of March, 1864, he writes from "Camp Orange Co.:"

"The indications at present are that we shall have a hard struggle. General Grant is with the Army of the Potomac. All the officers' wives, sick, etc. have been sent to Washington. No ingress or egress from the lines is now permitted, and no papers are allowed to come out. They claim to be assembling a large force."

On April 28th he writes from the same camp:

"I dislike to send letters within reach of the enemy, as they might serve, if captured, to bring distress on others. But you must sometimes cast your thoughts on the Army of Northern Virginia, and never forget it in your pious prayers. It is preparing for a great struggle, but I pray and trust that the great God, Mighty to deliver, will spread over it his Almighty arm and drive its enemies before it."

A third letter to the same person, which we give in full, is of considerable interest, as showing General Lee's love of a pleasant jest, and from the fact that the article named in it has been placed in the writer's hands for reproduction. Following the letter is an engraving of this historic pincushion:

"CAMP ORANGE CO., 7th Apr., 1864.

"MY DEAR COUSIN MARGARET: I send you a pincushion made on the banks of the Ohio. The sentiment on its face I trust inspires the action of every man in the Confederacy, whilst their hearts overflow with the passion inscribed on its reverse. A soldier's heart, you know, is divided between love and glory. One goes to Richmond to-day who has his share of both. You

will probably see him. Elevate his desire for the latter, but do not hearken to his words on the former.

"Soliciting your prayers for the safety of the army, the success of our cause, and the restoration of peace to our country,

"I am, with great affection,

"Very truly yours,

"R. E. LEE.

"MISS MARGARET STUART."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *EARLY'S VALLEY CAMPAIGN.*

Butler on the James.—Beauregard at Petersburg.—Butler Defeated.—Sigel Defeated at Newmarket.—Hunter Succeeds Sigel.—He Defeats and Kills General W. E. Jones.—Sheridan's Cavalry Movement.—Encountered and Defeated by Hampton.—Hunter's March upon Lynchburg.—Early Sent to the Valley.—Hunter Retires through the Mountains.—Early's Plan of Advance to Maryland.—At Sharpsburg.—Defeats Wallace on the Monocacy.—Marches upon Washington.—Federal Alarm.—Early Returns to the Valley.—Battle of Kernstown.—Federal Defeat.—Sheridan Sent to the Valley.—Battle of Winchester.—Early Defeated.—Fight at Fisher's Hill.—Early again Driven Back.—He Surprises and Defeats the Federals at Cedar Creek.—Sheridan Rallies his Army and Gains a Victory.—The Spring Campaign.—Sheridan drives Early from the Valley and forms a Junction with Grant.—Barbarism of the Valley Campaign.

THE collateral operations bearing on the general plan of campaign adopted by General Grant in Virginia now claim attention. While the contest was in progress between Lee and Grant in Spottsylvania and Hanover co-operative columns were in motion in other quarters. Sigel was operating in the Valley; Crook and Averell were advancing in South-western Virginia toward the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad; and Butler was ascending the James with a view of operating against Richmond and Petersburg from the south side of that river. On the 5th of May, Butler with his main force, about 30,000 strong, entered the James, and on the 6th landed at City Point and Bermuda Hundred, a point of land at the intersection of the James and Appomattox rivers.

A column was at once sent to capture Petersburg, but on approaching that place it was turned back by a false rumor that the town was strongly occupied by the Confederates, though in fact both Richmond and Petersburg were but feebly defended. Butler fortified his position at Bermuda Hundred by the erection of earthworks extending from the James to the Appomat-

tox, and embracing a front of about three miles. While thus engaged he sent a detachment of infantry and cavalry to sever the connection between Richmond and Petersburg by breaking up the railroad, and to make a reconnoissance of the intervening country. This detachment encountered a Confederate force, before which it fell back after inflicting some damage on the railroad.

All of the available force south of James River and that in North and South Carolina were ordered up to oppose Butler. General Beauregard arrived at Petersburg on the 10th of May, and assumed command of the troops assembled there. He immediately took energetic steps to oppose the advance of Butler. On the 16th a battle ensued, in which Butler was defeated and forced to retire within his defences at Bermuda Hundred. It is thought that General Beauregard would have gained a decisive victory had not General Whiting failed to attack as ordered. The prompt action of Beauregard on the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad resulted in the "bottling up" of General Butler until he was called to the north side of the James River to reinforce General Grant before Richmond.

Early in May, General Sigel entered the Valley with a force of 10,000 or 12,000 men, and proceeded to advance toward Staunton. The Valley at that time was occupied only by a small force under General Imboden, which was wholly inadequate for its defence. General Breckenridge was therefore withdrawn from South-western Virginia to oppose Sigel. On the 15th of May, Breckenridge with a force of 3000 men encountered Sigel at Newmarket, and defeated him and compelled him to retire behind Cedar Creek. The cadets of the Virginia Military Institute formed a portion of Breckenridge's division, and behaved with distinguished gallantry. General Breckenridge wished to shield these youths, but they insisted upon being led forward, and were soon in the hottest of the fight, where they maintained themselves with the steadiness of veterans. After the battle of Newmarket, Breckenridge was withdrawn from the Valley to reinforce Lee, as has been before stated, in the neighborhood of Hanover Junction.

In the mean time, Crook and Averell had reached the Vir-

ginia and Tennessee Railroad, where they inflicted some damage, but were compelled to retire by a force sent against them by General Sam Jones. They then proceeded to join the main column operating in the Valley.

After the battle of Newmarket, Sigel was relieved by General David Hunter, who was instructed by General Grant to advance upon Staunton, thence to Charlottesville, and on to Lynchburg if circumstances favored that movement.

Breckenridge having been withdrawn, General W. E. Jones was ordered to the Valley to oppose Hunter, who slowly advanced, opposed by Imboden with an almost nominal force. About the 4th of June, Imboden was joined by General Jones in the neighborhood of Harrisonburg with a force of between 3000 and 4000 men, which he had hastily collected in South-western Virginia. This force, however, being composed of fragments of regiments and brigades, lacked compactness, and was therefore quite unreliable. Jones, nevertheless, wishing to attack Hunter before he could be joined by Crook and Averell, who were advancing from the opposite direction to Staunton, determined to give him battle without delay.

Although greatly outnumbered, he engaged Hunter near Port Republic, where he was defeated and killed. There were few men in the army of greater bravery and worth, and his loss was deeply felt. After the fall of Jones, McCauslin opposed Hunter with gallantry and vigor, but his small force was no match for the greatly superior force against which he contended.

The affairs in the Valley now began to attract the attention of the commanding generals of both armies. It was evident that if Hunter could succeed in taking Lynchburg and breaking up the canal and Central Railroad, it would only be necessary to tap the Richmond and Danville and the Petersburg and Weldon railroads to complete a line of circumvallation around Richmond and Petersburg.

On the 7th of June, General Grant detached General Sheridan, with a large cavalry force, with instructions to break up the Central Railroad between Richmond and Gordonsville, then proceed to the James River and Kanawha Canal, break that line of communication with Richmond, and then to co-ope-

rate with Hunter in his operations against Lynchburg. About the same time General Lee sent General Breckenridge with his division, 2500 strong, to occupy Rockfish Gap of the Blue Ridge to deflect Hunter from Charlottesville and protect the Central Railroad as far as practicable. A few days later General Early was detached by General Lee to oppose Hunter, and take such other steps as in his judgment would tend to create a diversion in favor of Richmond. General Sheridan, in compliance with his instructions, proceeded by a circuitous route to strike the railroad somewhere in the neighborhood of Gordonsville. This movement was, however, discovered by General Hampton, who with a considerable force of cavalry encountered Sheridan on the 12th of June at Travillian's Station. After much severe and varied fighting Sheridan was defeated, and in order to escape was obliged to make a night-retreat. After a difficult and circuitous march he rejoined General Grant south of Richmond. This was one of the most masterly and spirited cavalry engagements of the war.

Hunter, finding Rockfish Gap occupied in force, was unable to comply with that part of his instructions which directed him to Charlottesville. He therefore continued his march up the Valley, with the view of reaching Lynchburg by way of some one of the passes of the Blue Ridge south of the James River. In the neighborhood of Staunton he was joined by Crook and Averell, increasing his force to about 20,000 men, including cavalry and artillery. From Staunton he advanced by way of Lexington and Buchanan, burning and destroying everything that came in his way, leaving a track of desolation rarely witnessed in the course of civilized warfare. He crossed the Blue Ridge in the neighborhood of the Peaks of Otter, and approached Lynchburg by the way of the Lynchburg and Salem turnpike, having been vigorously opposed by McCauslin throughout his line of march.

In compliance with his instructions, General Early, on the 13th of June, withdrew his corps,\* consisting of about 8000

\* The Second corps, formerly commanded by General Ewell, who had been compelled through ill-health to give up operations in the field, and had been placed in command of the defences of Richmond.



infantry and 24 pieces of artillery, from the Army of Northern Virginia and proceeded toward Staunton. The artillery was subsequently increased to 40 guns, and his forces were further augmented by the addition of about 1500 cavalry and 2000 infantry. At Charlottesville, Early received intelligence of the rapid advance of Hunter upon Lynchburg with a force of 20,000 men.

Promptly shifting his objective point, and availing himself of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, he moved with such rapidity that he reached Lynchburg in time to rescue it. At that time the only force at hand for the defence of Lynchburg was the division of Breckenridge, less than 2000 strong, and a few hundred home-guards, composed of old men and boys whose age exempted them from active service. Hunter, finding himself unexpectedly confronted by Early, relinquished his intended attack upon the city and sought safety in a rapid night-retreat.

The next day Early instituted a vigorous pursuit, which continued with uninterrupted pertinacity until Hunter was overtaken in the neighborhood of Salem, a small town on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, where he was encountered and obliged to make a hazardous and disorganizing retreat through the mountains to the Ohio River.

Having at a single blow liberated the Valley, Early determined upon an immediate invasion of Maryland and a bold advance on Washington City. As his instructions were discretionary, he was at liberty to adopt that course, which at the time was both in a political and military point of view the best plan of action that could have been assumed.

The defence of Richmond being the settled policy of the Confederate Government, General Lee had on two occasions assumed the offensive in order to relieve that place from the paralyzing influence of the Federals.

The invasion of Maryland in 1862 and the campaign into Pennsylvania the following year had relieved Richmond of the presence of the enemy for more than a year, but the tide of war had again returned, and that celebrated city was gradually

yielding to the powerful embrace of her besiegers, which could only be loosened by a strong diversion in her favor.

This Early undertook with the force at his command after the disposal of Hunter's army. By uniting with his own corps the division of Breckenridge and Ransom's cavalry, Early found himself at the head of about 12,000 men. Though he knew this force to be inadequate to the magnitude of the work in hand, nevertheless he determined to overcome his want of numbers by the rapidity of his movements, thus hoping to acquire a momentum by velocity that would enable him to overcome that produced by the superior weight of his opponents.

After the dispersion of Hunter's forces one day in preparation sufficed Early for the commencement of his advance upon Maryland. His route through the Valley extended over a distance of about two hundred miles, but the road was good, and, although the country had been laid waste a short time before by Hunter, the genial season and fertile soil had already reproduced abundant subsistence for the horses and mules of the expedition, but the greater part of the supplies for the troops were necessarily drawn from Lynchburg and Richmond. To prevent delay, therefore, orders were sent to these places directing supplies to be forwarded to convenient points along the line of march. Staunton was reached on the 27th of June. This was the most suitable point at which to supply the army, and here Early made a short halt to make the necessary arrangements to ensure the uninterrupted continuance of his march. In this he was ably assisted by Colonel Allan, Majors Harman, Rogers, Hawks, and other members of his staff. The beautiful Valley of Virginia everywhere gave evidence of the ravages of war. Throughout the march down the Valley the unsparing hand of Hunter was proclaimed by the charred ruins of its once beautiful and happy homes. At Lexington were seen the cracked and tottering walls of the Virginia Military Institute, the pride of Virginia and the *alma mater* of many of the distinguished sons of the South, and near them appeared the blackened remains of the private residence of Governor Letcher.

When Early reached Winchester he learned that there was a

Federal force at Harper's Ferry and another at Martinsburg which it was necessary to dislodge before attempting the passage of the Potomac; and this was effected by the 4th of July without much opposition, the Federals having withdrawn without awaiting an attack. The way being now clear, the passage of the Potomac was made on the 5th at Shepherds-town, and the army advanced to Sharpsburg.

Since the defeat of Hunter the advance of Early had been so rapid that his design to invade Maryland had not been discovered by the Federal authorities in time to oppose his passage of the Potomac. But his entrance into Maryland being now known, it had produced great consternation as far as Baltimore and Washington. The boldness of this movement caused Early's force to be greatly exaggerated, and rumor soon magnified it to four or five times its real strength. The invasion was considered of such magnitude, and the cities of Washington and Baltimore were thought to be in such imminent danger, that the greatest alacrity was instituted in every direction to collect troops for the defence of those places.

The object of General Early being simply a diversion in favor of the operations about Richmond, he remained a day or two at Sharpsburg in order that the impression created by his invasion might have time to produce its full effect before he exposed his weakness by a further advance. At this time all the troops in the vicinity of Washington had been collected, besides which a large number of quartermaster's employés had been improvised as soldiers, thus making the force at hand exceed 20,000 men, while two corps from the army besieging Richmond and a part of another corps from North Carolina, intended to reinforce that army, had been detached and put in rapid motion for the defence of the capital.

In the face of these odds Early continued his advance into Maryland. At Frederick he found General Wallace, with about 10,000 men, in position to oppose the passage of the Monocacy. Immediate preparations were made to dislodge Wallace and effect a crossing of that stream. Rodes was thrown forward on the Baltimore and Ramseur on the Washington City road, while Gordon and Breckenridge, with a por-

tion of Ransom's cavalry, inclining to the right, moved to the fords a mile or two below the railroad bridge. At the same time the heights contiguous to the river were crowned by Long's artillery (consisting of the guns of Nelson, Braxton, King, and McLaughlin) to cover the movement of the other troops.

When the troops had gained their position the crossing at the lower fords was promptly accomplished, and Breckenridge and Gordon, quickly forming their line of battle, advanced rapidly up the stream toward the Federal position, and, after a short but spirited conflict, defeated Wallace, whose army soon fell into a panic and fled in wild confusion, spreading dismay for miles in every direction by the terrible accounts they gave of the tremendous force Early was leading through the country. The route being now open, Early proceeded by rapid marches to within cannon-shot of the walls of Washington. Since his entrance into Maryland his force had been exaggerated by the inhabitants and the soldiery he had met, until in their terrified imagination it was magnified to 30,000 or 40,000 men.

On his arrival before the Federal capital, the exaggerated rumor of his strength having preceded him, its occupants were variously affected. The Federal authorities and all of their adherents were in a state of consternation, while the Southern sympathizers were full of exultation, for at the time it was thought by many that he would take the city. Had he had 20,000 or 30,000 men, he might have done so with a prospect of holding it and giving a new turn to subsequent military operations. But Early was too prudent and sagacious to attempt an enterprise with a force of 8000 men which if successful could only be of temporary benefit. He was therefore content to remain in observation long enough to give his movement full time to produce its greatest effect, and then withdrew in the face of a large army and recrossed the Potomac without molestation.

This campaign is remarkable for having accomplished more in proportion to the force employed, and for having given less public satisfaction, than any other campaign of the war. The